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Conclusions of the High-level Committee on Management at its twenty-sixth session

(Geneva, 10-11 October 2013)

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Adoption of the agenda	2
III.	Performance management	2
IV.	Status of action on the new Strategic Plan and results framework and response of the Committee to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system	4
V.	Review of the United Nations compensation package by the International Civil Service Commission	11
VI.	Mandatory age of separation	14
VII.	United Nations system data visualization platform	15
VIII.	Any other business	16
	A. Interaction between the Department of Safety and Security and staff associations concerning risky duty stations	16
	B. Domestic partnerships	17
	C. Proposed agenda items and venues for the next sessions of the Committee	17

Annexes

I.	Statement on the review of the common system compensation package by the International Civil Service Commission	18
II.	List of participants	20
III.	Checklist of documents	25

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I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Management held its twenty-sixth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 10 and 11 October 2013. The meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Committee, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization, Francis Gurry, and the Vice-Chair, the Deputy Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Jan Beagle.

II. Adoption of the agenda

2. The agenda as adopted by the Committee is reflected in the table of contents.

3. The complete list of participants is provided in annex II.

4. The checklist of documents is in annex III. All documents related to the session are available on the website of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) at: http://www.unsceb.org/content/october-2013-0.

5. The programme of work was structured following the new working methods of the Committee, that is, without reports from the networks, and without an agenda item entitled "Dialogue with the staff". The staff federations were invited to attend, as observers, the discussions on agenda items of direct relevance to the staff, and to offer their contributions during the substantive discussion of such items. Any written statements provided by the federations would continue to be annexed to the final report on the session.

III. Performance management

6. The Chair welcomed Jan Matsson, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), who presented the organization's pilot project on rewards and recognition. In 2011, UNOPS, with the agreement and support of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), introduced an innovative pilot programme for rewards, recognition and sanctions, which is closely linked to organizational and individual performance, and designed to increase the effectiveness of performance management across the organization. The UNOPS recognition policy has the overall aim to reinforce performance management with meaningful consequences and to enable managers to recognize and reward excellence. It comprises three elements: (a) merit rewards, which are performance-related financial rewards; (b) recognition awards, which are corporate awards aimed at recognizing the achievements of specific teams or individuals in various categories; and (c) performance-related sanctions, which are designed to address underperformance on an individual basis.

7. Throughout the pilot, UNOPS has conducted various internal evaluations to assess the impact of the policy on three key areas, namely performance management; staff satisfaction and motivation and awareness of organizational goals. Among those assessments is an external evaluation through PricewaterhouseCoopers. The findings of the evaluation noted that the policy has been well received by the majority of the UNOPS workforce, and has had a positive impact on significant elements of the performance management process such as the rating distribution, performance management compliance and senior management support. In this sense,

the pilot has created an environment where the foundations of sound performance management are in place and where, at the same time, there is an increased awareness of organizational goals across the organization. In conclusion, the experience of UNOPS is that by introducing this pilot, the performance management framework has become more solid, robust and meaningful.

8. Anne-Birgitte Albrectsen reported to the Committee on the performance management system of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with a particular focus on the management of underperformance. She pointed to the following success factors for managing underperformance: (a) a solid and mature system with consistent ratings; (b) a systematic approach to managing underperformance; (c) sustained efforts and support for both staff and managers; and (d) holistic and innovative practices and communication. In the context of the UNFPA system, underperforming staff members are given appropriate opportunities for training and development. Should those measures not bring sufficient improvements, clear policies for the non-renewal of contracts on the grounds of performance exist and are consistently applied in a due process.

9. Ms. Albrectsen illustrated that the organizational performance management process is increasingly supported by high quality data on rating distributions per organizational units and rating patterns of managers, to inform further steps towards management support and increased rating consistency. She also underlined the importance of multi-rater feedback, in order to ensure the comprehensiveness of performance evaluations, as well as to address cultural and communication challenges. Performance discussions are encouraged to take place throughout the year and not only at regular and formal deadlines. This approach avoids surprises in formal performance discussions and can therefore reduce potential conflicts on the matter, which are dealt with through a strengthened and accelerated internal rebuttal process.

10. In the subsequent discussion, organizations stated their appreciation for the valuable sharing of experiences by UNOPS and UNFPA. Several stressed the importance of the engagement of senior management and of the robustness of the appraisal process. The robustness of related administrative processes and adequate legal support were mentioned as indispensable success factors for the implementation of any performance management model. The Legal Network offered its support in that regard.

11. Staff federations highlighted the need to better link performance management to other aspects of the performance management framework such as career development, effective selection and promotion procedures and induction and socialization programmes. They welcomed the upcoming ICSC review of compensation as an opportunity to explicitly recognize performance and establish appropriate linkages with staff compensation. They also raised concerns that, with the increasing utilization of non-staff contracts, consistent performance management practices would be compromised, and they expressed their reservations regarding the application of Bell-curve-compliant or other forced performance rating distributions. The federations pointed out that performance management was a core issue for them as well and reiterated their request to be included in the Human Resources Network Working Group on Performance Management.

12. Several organizations discussed how to get to a broader notion of performance management, rewarding excellence over satisfactory performance. The need to

expand performance management into a meaningful staff development process was mentioned. In that respect, the use of professional certifications for internationally recognized standards in various occupational groups was referred to as an avenue worth exploring further.

13. The United Nations Medical Directors Working Group highlighted that performance-related discussions often offer an opportunity to bring to light previously hidden health issues — both physical and psychological. As psychosocial and stress-related disorders have increased significantly, the Medical Directors offered to develop guidelines and other pertinent support for line managers to better recognize such health problems. That offer was unanimously welcomed by participants. During the following broader discussion on issues related to medical conditions, several organizations expressed a request for the Human Resources Network to work closely with the Medical Directors Working Group on reviewing the process and approaches of managing sick leave.

14. The Committee:

(a) Reaffirmed its strategic priority to focus on the development of an organizational environment that motivates staff, recognizes good performance, strengthens linkage to career development, and sanctions poor performance;

(b) Confirmed the commitment of member organizations to use the recently devised pilot projects as reference frameworks in the efforts of their respective organizations to develop performance management and reward recognition schemes;

(c) Welcomed the offers for support by the Legal Network and the Medical Directors Working Group to the efforts by organizations in this domain, and requested the Working Group on Performance Management to engage with the Legal Network and with the Medical Directors on staff health and safety issues in general and their interface with performance management in particular;

(d) Requested the Working Group on Performance Management of the Human Resources Network to continue its work towards supporting the implementation of the Committee's strategic objectives in this area;

(e) Expressed appreciation to UNOPS and UNFPA for their insightful presentations.

IV. Status of action on the new Strategic Plan and results framework and response of the Committee to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

15. At its twenty-fifth session, in March 2013, the Committee approved its Strategic Plan for 2013-2016, outlining the priority objectives for the Committee and its networks for the next three to five years. Among the key drivers of the Strategic Plan, are the mandates set by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The results framework that was developed to operationalize the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan outlines the responses by the Committee to the mandates set out in the review, as also

summarized in the action plan formulated by the Committee in response to the review (see CEB/2013/HLCM/12).

16. The expectations of Member States towards a timely and comprehensive delivery on the operational mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was reconfirmed by the Economic and Social Council with the adoption of resolution 2013/5, in which the Council reaffirmed the mandates set out in the review, called for its timely and full implementation by the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies and emphasized the importance of a coherent monitoring framework for the review, which should be robust, evidence-based, and cost-effective while imposing a minimum reporting burden on Governments and the United Nations system.

17. In the opening of the discussion, the Committee was addressed by Thomas Gass, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, on the monitoring framework for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which is being developed through a consultative approach under the leadership of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Group, with the full involvement of the Committee. The objective of the exercise is to ensure that the review is fully tracked, leading to the first report on the monitoring framework to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council in February 2014, so as to enable the Council to report on what initiatives have been initiated and where implementation can be expected at a later stage.

18. The Assistant Secretary-General emphasized that the ambitious deadlines and requests set out in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review reflected the view of Member States that an intensified effort was needed to make progress in the harmonization and simplification of business practices.

19. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee agreed that the mandates set out in the review in the area of operations for development were very ambitious and that the development of an adequate response by organizations needed to be given priority. While moving ahead, it will be necessary to cater for the different business models of member organizations, which in turn respond to different mandates which often include, but are not limited to, operational activities for development. The appropriate focus will need to be placed on the coordination and harmonization of business practices and corresponding regulatory and policy frameworks, as well as on their unification, while always and accurately assessing the costs and benefits of the different approaches.

20. The Committee then proceeded to review the on-going initiatives for all the priority areas of the Strategic Plan, also highlighting their linkages with the relevant mandates set out in the review. The Committee noted that it offered a useful platform for member organizations to devise and implement the appropriate response to the operational mandates set out in the review that require policy coordination and the engagement of headquarters. The Committee aims to report back to CEB in line with the time frames identified in the review for the Secretary-General to be able to meet his reporting requirements in accordance with resolution 2013/5.

21. The direct linkage established between the Strategic Plan and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was welcomed as a useful approach to ensure that the

Committee and its networks deliver on the mandates set out in the resolution. Continuing coordination with the United Nations Development Group needs to ensure consistency of action with country-level operational activities that fall under the purview of the Group. In that regard, the Committee also welcomed the continued engagement of the Committee in the discussions on the monitoring framework led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Priority A: attracting and retaining talent

22. Under the first priority area identified in the Strategic Plan, there are activities that respond to the mandates set out in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review related to a unified set of rules, regulations, policies and procedures, to common services and to inter-agency frameworks for support services (see General Assembly resolution 67/226, paras. 154 and 155). The work by the Committee in this area has a focus both at the country level and at the headquarters level, primarily through the engagement with ICSC in its work on the review of the United Nations system compensation package, the progressive elaboration and implementation of the inter-agency mobility agreement, the pilots for harmonized recruitment approaches at the field level (and expected further developments at the global policy level), and the coordinated design and implementation of performance management and reward recognition frameworks.

Priority B: redesigning and innovating United Nations business models

23. The second priority area in the Strategic Plan is where the bulk of the work related to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review takes place. It focuses on common and shared services, either through a lead agency approach, or a United Nations service centre, or through outsourcing modalities; on improved common procurement practices; and on other initiatives to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system. The actions under this priority respond to the mandates set out in the review on the rationalization of business operations, inter-agency frameworks, the establishment of common support services and greater collaboration in procurement (ibid., paras. 153-156). The feasibility study on the interoperability among enterprise resource planning systems launched under the aegis of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Network also falls under this priority area and is a direct response to the request of the General Assembly (ibid., para. 160).

24. The following initiatives are currently under way:

(a) The Procurement Network has initiated a number of projects on the enhancement of common services, such as the common procurement of vehicles led by UNDP as well as the location-based procurement collaboration in Geneva, Rome, New York and Copenhagen;

(b) Business operations strategy: the Committee is working closely with the United Nations Development Group to address any headquarters obstacles to the implementation of the strategy, as a direct response to the request of the General Assembly regarding the support to programme countries that have adopted the "Delivering as one" approach (ibid., para. 141). Furthermore, in close coordination with the Group, the Committee has supported training programmes by the United Nations System Staff College that introduce the strategy to United Nations country teams;

(c) Several initiatives funded under the Plan of Action for the Harmonization and Simplification of Business Practices, and notably: (a) the Common Treasury Services project, which continues to deliver concrete results, with increasing buy-in across the United Nations system, in the four focus areas of banking services, investments (including risk management), foreign exchange and payments; and (b) the harmonization of the management of the after-service health insurance;

(d) The implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) by the United Nations system is almost complete and represents a very significant milestone towards the increased transparency and harmonization of financial practices within the system.

25. The Committee members were also informed that the request from the Procurement Network for decisions regarding their work would be circulated electronically for approval.

26. Regarding the countries piloting the business operations strategy, including Brazil, the Committee felt that empirical evidence on the outcome of the pilots and a comprehensive cost-benefit assessment, subsequent to their implementation, were needed before any decision on a global roll-out was taken.

27. The Committee members also discussed the value of establishing common service centres at three different levels (country, regional and global), and some organizations indicated that it might be necessary to review the practicality of implementing this approach at all three levels at a later stage with Member States, given the potential linkages with the ongoing intra-agency rationalization of business processes.

Priority C: supporting the second phase of "Delivering as one"

28. As the General Assembly has endorsed the continuation of the "Delivering as one" process, the United Nations Development Group has created standard operating procedures for countries that wish to implement the "Delivering as one" approach, while recognizing that "not one size fits all". However, as some of these requirements necessitate system-wide action, the Committee has included in its Strategic Plan actions that require its attention to enable the Group and country offices to become "Delivering as one" countries. These actions respond to mandates related to pursuing more efficient and cost-effective support services, and to the identification of and response to challenges and bottlenecks to cooperation in field operations (ibid., paras. 137, 140 and 152).

29. The work by the Procurement Network previously mentioned and related to joint procurement teams in the field responds directly to this need. Through this work, inter-agency collaboration to achieve efficiency gains has been made easier and the Network reports that all obstacles to collaboration in the area of procurement have been removed. This is also in line with the directions of the standard operating procedures for business operations, which require the establishment of joint procurement teams.

30. Furthermore, in the area of human resources, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-led project on local staff recruitment will also remove obstacles to implementing the standard operating procedures, by enabling United Nations country teams to rationalize their

recruitment processes through collaboration and capacity-sharing, leading to the streamlining of the hiring process for national staff.

31. The Co-Chair of the United Nations Development Group working group on issues relating to resident coordinators briefed the Committee on progress made towards the strengthening of (a) the management and accountability system; (b) the resident coordinator assessment centre; (c) the resident coordinator performance appraisal; and (d) updating the resident coordinator job description, including a guidance note. One Committee member underlined the need for a strong link between performance assessment and adherence to the management and accountability system, including the firewall function.

Priority D: strengthening the risk management and oversight architecture

32. The work launched by the Committee under the fourth priority area in the Strategic Plan offers a targeted response to the mandate set out in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review towards ensuring coherence and complementarity in the oversight function in the United Nations (ibid., para. 167). The expected outcomes include a proposal for a common reference model for risk management, oversight and accountability for the United Nations system, aimed at improving the relationship with Member States on the level and quality of controls in place in the organizations to allow for rationalized oversight that focuses on key risks.

33. Such a reference model would also enable member organizations to showcase the considerable achievements made in the past few years by the United Nations system in the areas of controls, risk mitigation, transparency and accountability (including through the implementation of enterprise resource planning systems, IPSAS, audit oversight committees, statements of internal controls, etc.).

34. Substantive work towards the achievement of this goal has started under the leadership of UNFPA, UNESCO and UNOPS, also benefiting from the input and advice by the Representatives of the Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations. The first step in this process was the launch by the CEB secretariat of a stocktaking survey of the current models in place. The pilot agencies in the exercise are: UNFPA, UNOPS, UNESCO, WFP, UNDP and WIPO. The next step of the project will be the launch of a second and comprehensive round of surveys, so as to produce a reference model to be presented to the Committee at its session in fall 2014.

35. Noting the importance of cybersecurity for all agencies, as also reflected in the results framework, the Chair welcomed the representative of the ICT Network to brief the Committee on progress in this area. The Chair also welcomed, by teleconference, the Vice President and Chief Information Officer of the World Bank, Stefanie von Friedeburg, along with the Chief Information Security Officer of the World Bank, Clay Lin.

36. The representative of the ICT Network thanked the Committee for the opportunity to highlight the key activities taking place within the Network as they related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for "coordinated work in the area of crisis preparedness and response, business continuity and cybersecurity" and the "considerable common ground with respect to how to best protect ourselves from business disruptions and security threats". Emphasizing the growing importance of information security, it was noted that during the general debate in the General

Assembly, several Heads of State called upon the United Nations to take action to address information security, and that the Secretary-General had recently appealed to Member States to respect international laws and treaties after it became public that some Member States had gained unauthorized access to the United Nations videoconferencing system.

37. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) informed the Committee that a United Nations-wide framework on cybersecurity and cybercrime would be presented at the meeting of the High-level Committee on Programmes of 17 and 18 October, in response to a decision of CEB to address the growing risk posed by cyberthreats and cybercrime to global stability. The proposed framework presents the United Nations system with a set of principles that guide its entities in integrating cybercrime and cybersecurity support to Member States in their programme development plans.

38. The ICT Network then reported that at the recently concluded annual session of the Network information security subgroup, the chief security officers of the United Nations system agreed to proceed with the development of a charter for an inter-agency computer incident response team. This facility is designed to support the efforts of agencies to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of their information infrastructure and assets while preserving the federated nature of the United Nations systems agencies and United Nations-affiliated organizations that participate in the response team.

39. To further elaborate on the importance and value of a computer incident response team, the Chair called upon the representatives of the World Bank, participating by teleconference to offer their perspective. Ms. von Friedeburg noted that the recent information security journey for the Bank began in 2007 after their first significant security breach. The group performing these functions has now grown to 50 staff members, based both in North America and at an off-shore service centre. Mr. Lin noted that the office of ICT consolidated in late 2008, when an analysis revealed an underinvestment in information security activities, including a fragmented governance, resulting in an insufficient capability for security response. Following the centralization of the governance and functional capacity, the Bank was able to construct a robust facility that initiated service in early 2010 with a scope that includes an around-the-clock incident response. The off-shore service has become an extension to the operations at headquarters and has realized a benefit of increased cost efficiency. The Bank now has standardized processes with improved intervention, and has reduced time for intervention from days to minutes. Mr. Clay noted that this service was provided to all entities of the Bank which operated in a federated manner, and was approximately 8 per cent of total expenditure for ICT. Mr. Clay concluded by offering to collaborate with the United Nations system by sharing threat analysis, lessons learned and many of the details of the computer incident response team, including job descriptions and skill requirements.

40. The Chair thanked ITU and the World Bank and, during the discussion, the Secretariat expressed support for the improvement of the capacity of the United Nations system to address information security concerns, noting that in a matter of three years the Bank was able to construct a robust service. The Department of Safety and Security noted that at the most recent session of the Inter-agency Security Management Network, ITU had presented the challenge of cybersecurity, using as an example an attack during a major conference in late 2012. The

representative of the Inter-agency Security Management Network stated that it had found the presentation on cyberthreats and attacks very informative. Noting the multifaceted aspects of cybersecurity, the Inter-agency Network recognized that there was a need for increasing awareness on this issue, as well as for clarifying governance and reporting lines within the respective organizations, and supported that there be synergy between the ICT Network and the Inter-agency Security Management Network on this matter.

41. In his summary, the Chair noted that cybersecurity remained part of the Strategic Plan results framework, and agencies would need to face this important issue, remaining mindful of appropriately dividing responsibilities between bodies, including the High-level Committee on Management and the High-level Committee on Programmes. In addition, the Chair noted that work in this area should focus on strategic risk and the vulnerabilities the organizations were facing as a result of the insecure environment, and in this respect the contribution of the World Bank would be invaluable.

42. The Committee:

(a) Thanked the ICT Network for its work;

(b) Took note of all the work done by the High-level Committee on Programmes in the area of cybersecurity;

(c) Thanked the World Bank for its generous offer and called upon the ICT Network to take concrete action to gain from experiences and lessons learned.

Priority E: Measuring and communicating results

43. The Strategic Plan places a significant focus on measuring and communicating results. Not all actions undertaken by the Committee in this area are explicitly linked to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. However, work on establishing common definitions of operating costs and standardized systems of cost control, as well as work to enhance the quality and quantity of information on the CEB website do respond directly to mandates (ibid., paras. 17 and 159).

44. The development of a United Nations system data visualization platform (see sect. VII below) to improve the capacity and ability of the United Nations system to present its data, as well as the system's implementation of standards for data presentation, represents a direct response to the calls made in the review.

45. In 2012, the CEB secretariat launched an enhanced system for collection of financial statistics based on harmonized definitions of expenses and revenues. The full set of 2010 and 2011 data is now displayed on the new CEB website. In 2013, the secretariat further enhanced the SAP-based system and collected data for 2012, which will shortly be made available. The CEB secretariat is continuously improving the system to enhance automation, improve the collection mechanism so as to reduce the burden for the organizations, and broaden the range of data collected.

46. A working group comprising representatives of nine agencies and led by UNICEF has been established recently to respond to the call made in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review for a common definition of operating costs and a common and standardized system of cost control.

47. The Committee:

(a) Affirmed its commitment to the programme of work outlined in the results framework, which represents the guiding tool for the operationalization of the Strategic Plan for 2013-2016;

(b) Encouraged member organizations that have not yet done so, to express their interest in joining in the activities outlined in the results framework;

(c) Took note of the work currently undertaken to respond to the mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (ibid., paras. 17, 137, 140, 152, 153, 155, 159, 160, 162 and 167) and encouraged the lead and participating organizations to give this work the highest priority;

(d) Expressed its commitment to elaborate a response to the request of the General Assembly (ibid., para. 155) towards developing plans for common service centres, taking into consideration the requirements of the different mandates and corresponding business models of member organizations;

(e) Requested each network of the Committee to review the requirements of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (ibid., para. 155) with respect to their respective functional areas, and propose a coordinated response to the Committee, also identifying where there is value in interoperability and appropriate harmonization of rules, regulations, policies and procedures;

(f) Committed its full support to the pilot on the establishment of a common service centre in Brazil, structured along the model offered by the business operations strategy, and looked forward to a comprehensive cost-benefit assessment, including by the networks, of the outcome of the business operations strategy pilots, including of the common service centre in Brazil, subsequent to their implementation in 2014, with a view to broadening their scope pursuant to paragraph (d) above;

(g) Welcomed the results being achieved by the use of the lead agency approach for common support services at the country, regional and global levels and requested the networks to review policies, procedures and results with the aim to remove any remaining obstacles to the approach of the lead agency in each of their areas of expertise;

(h) Recommended that organizations that have established global service centres assess their readiness and availability to expand those centres to support additional organizations, towards the creation of common service centres at the global level;

(i) Took note with appreciation of the work of the United Nations Development Group Working Group on Resident Coordinator Issues and confirmed its continuing support to the work of the Group.

V. Review of the United Nations compensation package by the International Civil Service Commission

48. The Vice-Chair of the Committee opened the discussion welcoming the Vice-Chair of ICSC and emphasizing that the review of the United Nations compensation package was a subject of utmost importance to the organizations, as

its outcome would significantly impact their ability to successfully deliver against their respective mandates in the future. For this reason, the active collaboration of organizations with ICSC on this subject figures prominently among the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2013-2016.

49. The Vice-Chair of the Committee informed the Committee of the establishment of the Steering Group called for by the Committee, at its twenty-fifth session to provide strategic guidance and support throughout the review. The Steering Group is chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Committee and is composed of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management of the Secretariat and of representatives of the HLCM Committee from UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WIPO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Respecting the criteria of a balanced representation of all constituencies of the Committee and of keeping the number of members as limited as possible, the Group would be open to other interested organizations.

50. The Vice-Chair of ICSC briefed the Committee on the progress of the compensation review. He stated his appreciation for the active involvement of the Committee and the Human Resources Network in the process, confirming that such an active involvement would be instrumental to a successful outcome. He outlined the next steps of the review, including a staff survey planned for October, and interviews by the Chair and Vice-Chair of ICSC with executive heads at the main duty stations. The interviews would be conducted based on a standardized set of questions and with the support of an external consultant to compile an aggregated report of the visits. Both activities would serve as preparation for the first meeting of the working group, planned for early December and aimed at laying the groundwork in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the present system and mapping out the next steps of the review.

51. The Co-Chair of the Human Resources Network briefed the Committee on the Human Resources Directors' retreat held in Copenhagen in September. He explained that the purpose of that meeting was to clarify three questions: Why do we welcome the review efforts? What do organizations want to get out of the review? How do we want to collaborate as organizations? He explained that some common ground among organizations was already identified, while at the same time organizations were seeking some increased flexibility in the compensation system to accommodate their different mandates and needs, to remain attractive while containing costs where necessary. The substantive discussion among organizations would continue and organizations were keen to actively engage in the review process, including through institutionalized mechanisms. In that respect, the Co-Chair of the Human Resources Network regretted the abolishment of the Steering Committee composed of ICSC, organizations and staff federations that had been active until the session in July.

52. The staff federations stressed the need for the review to be inclusive and requested the establishment of adequate bridging mechanisms among the CEB secretariat, the Committee and the working groups. They too expressed their regret for the abolishment of the Steering Committee, which represented a valuable instrument for continuous coordination among all the stakeholders involved.

53. In the subsequent discussions, representatives of organizations expressed their full support for the review. Some highlighted the challenges in complying with the

recent requests by ICSC for data, both in terms of additional workload and data availability. Strong support for maintaining and strengthening the common system was expressed, as well as for the need to ensure more flexibility for organizations to adapt their compensation strategies to the different and evolving mandates and the variety of labour markets.

54. Organizations emphasized the need to ensure continued attractiveness of the common system as an employer, in particular in hardship duty stations. Some members expressed the need to create a dedicated working group to design specific measures improving conditions of service and gender and geographic diversity in D and E duty stations, in line with the Strategic Plan.

55. Participants suggested that the Human Resources Network should seek support from the Finance and Budget Network to ensure an accurate financial evaluation of proposals put forward. A number of interventions stressed the need to find a balance between the importance of attracting and retaining highly qualified and motivated staff for effective programmatic delivery, and the financial constraints a number of organizations were facing.

56. The Vice-Chair of ICSC indicated his agreement to the requests for a steering mechanism to collectively and inclusively guide the work of the review. He expressed his confidence that such a view would be shared by other members of ICSC at the next session in March 2014.

57. The Committee:

(a) Welcomed the compensation review by ICSC and expressed full commitment of the organizations to an active participation in this exercise;

(b) Approved for submission to CEB the statement of the Committee on the compensation review (as contained in annex I to the present report) outlining the organizations' vision and expectations;

(c) Approved the establishment of the High-level Committee on Management Strategic Group on the Compensation Review and asked the Group to guide the development and formulation of common positions for the upcoming discussions and negotiations in the ICSC working groups;

(d) Welcomed the launch of an external data collection exercise, led by the CEB secretariat, with the objective of providing a solid data reference for the development of proposals in the course of the ICSC review. This exercise would provide the evidence to benchmark the United Nations against comparable employer practices in regard to compensation. It would include high-level design considerations such as pay philosophy and labour market definitions, as well as specific elements of compensation and remuneration;

(e) Agreed to formally express, in a letter from the Chair of the Committee to the Chair of ICSC, the interest and willingness of the organizations to be actively engaged in a fully inclusive process with ICSC in the course of the entire review, and to request the establishment of the appropriate institutional mechanisms to facilitate such involvement.

VI. Mandatory age of separation

58. The Vice-Chair of ICSC informed the High-level Committee on Management that on 12 November the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly would start its deliberations on the ICSC recommendation to increase the mandatory age of separation to age 65 for current staff members. He explained that the recommendation was made after a study conducted by an external consultant, and that the concerns expressed by organizations had been partially taken into account by suggesting a deferred implementation to 1 January 2016.

59. The Co-Chair of the Human Resources Network briefed the Committee on the discussion at the most recent session of ICSC. She reported on the strong concerns expressed by organizations on the ICSC recommendation, pointing out that many organizations were currently at different stages in organizational and workforce realignment efforts, and that the current arrangements for mandatory age of retirement were facilitating the workforce planning in these situations. While the delayed implementation date of 1 January 2016 was welcomed as a step in the right direction, she indicated that, in the opinion of the Network, the recommendation did not provide sufficiently convincing arguments on its objectives and solid evidence of its benefits.

60. The staff federations confirmed their strong support to the ICSC recommendation, which is consistent with evident external trends. In the opinion of the federations, a coherent implementation of the ICSC recommendation would represent an important stress test for the common system in keeping the purpose and principles of Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. They also expressed the views that the mandatory age of separation should not be used as a tool for managing performance, and stated their disappointment with the deferral of the suggested implementation date to 2016. Prior to the closing of the open session, the staff federations expressed disappointment and concern owing to the unsatisfactory status of staff/management relations in most organizations of the United Nations common system. They informed of their joint initiative to bring this to the attention of the Fifth Committee.

61. During the discussion, many organizations indicated that a compelling argument in support of the recommendation to increase the mandatory age of separation to age 65 for current staff members had not been made by the Commission. Furthermore, they raised concerns about the level and quality of consultations with organizations during the preparatory study. Others stressed the fact that the implementation of the recommendation would considerably increase complexities in workforce planning, including for gender balance. The acquisition of new skills and talents could be slowed down significantly by the proposed change, also given the low turnover rate in organizations of the United Nations system. It was emphasized that mandatory age of separation was not a performance management tool, but an instrument to drive the normal adjustment of the overall workforce to acquire the right skills and achieve geographical and gender balance as requested by Member States. Specialized agencies pointed to the fact that any decision regarding the mandatory age of separation could only be implemented system-wide following deliberations by their respective governing bodies.

62. The Committee:

(a) Took note of the recommendation of ICSC to increase the mandatory age of separation for existing staff to 65 as of 1 January 2016;

(b) Stressed that reduced attrition rates would impact the ability of organizations to improve geographic representation and gender balance, and may impede the organizational and workforce realignment and planning which many organizations are undergoing, also in response to budgetary decisions taken by Member States;

(c) Recommended that executive heads of organizations consult with Member States to ensure that they are provided with the necessary flexibility to phase in raising the mandatory age of separation to age 65 for existing staff in a way that would enable smooth organizational and workforce planning, according to individual organizational needs.

VII. United Nations system data visualization platform

63. Of the many initiatives emerging from its retreat in January 2013, the Committee agreed to include in its Strategic Plan 2013-2016, as a priority, the improvement of the capacity and ability of the United Nations system to present data, as well as its implementation of standards for data presentation.

64. At its twenty-fifth session in March, the Committee agreed to create a working group that would explore this area further and propose a common approach. Responding to the need to develop such an approach, the CEB secretariat drafted a paper, in close consultation with several agencies, which defines a visualization platform for the presentation of high-level programme and management statistics.

65. The CEB secretariat introduced the project as an opportunity to visualize key issues facing organizations, to report on the deployment of its resources and to promote collective achievements. The Secretary of the Committee explained that what is being proposed is a communication platform which would use visualization to communicate high-level stories and to provide a snapshot of both what and how the United Nations system is doing collectively in some selected and cross-sectoral domains of activity, on the basis of a number of chosen criteria, such as "country" or others, and views over time.

66. The Committee received a presentation from UNHCR on how visualization can provide management and organizations at large with an important strategic tool, with which to realize a variety of communication goals. Emphasis was placed on the target audience, the definition of clear goals, design, measurements of success and entry barriers. Challenges included the growing need for expertise in marketing, data science and journalism. Next steps for the United Nations system were defined in terms of data access, definition and comparability. The Committee heard that through tools such as the Humanitarian Exchange Language, standards were already being applied to humanitarian data. However, an effective definition of the bigger picture and of the achievements of the United Nations system, it was argued, would remain challenging as long as emphasis was placed on the delivery of data as opposed to the message. In this regard, the United Nations system has significant ground to cover, while the need to change the perceptions of stakeholders remains.

67. Further detail provided by the CEB secretariat positioned the proposed platform as a storytelling tool, and one which will direct visitors to more granular data, hosted on any of the many thematic data-driven platforms. In this way, the project was presented as a response to priority E of the Strategic Plan (measuring and communicating results) and one which would leverage related initiatives in the standard harmonization of big data and open data.

68. In the long run, this project aims to combine and present statistics of three basic types: CEB data, country indicators and programme statistics. The platform aims to publish statistics, not data per se. This project must build on related initiatives currently ongoing in the United Nations system, ranging from those supporting the efficiency and results-based agenda, to the provision of open data, since the platform will link out to more granular resources, including visualizations, application programme interfaces, databases and data catalogues maintained by organizations, in order to provide a transparent view of organizations' activities. This is not a project to establish a "one size fits all" visualization solution for the United Nations system.

69. The discussion that ensued recognized the benefits of a collective visualization of United Nations system interests, activities and achievements. Members voiced the experiences within their own organizations in this domain and the absolute need to leverage available expertise, knowledge and related undertakings was regarded as a critical requirement of the project.

70. The Committee:

(a) Invited the Committee to consider information sources, expertise and initiatives that speak to this need. As a next step, members were asked to provide the CEB secretariat with focal points who may be contacted to advance this project. The immediate need is to establish a steering group of interested organizations, which will help oversee the project and facilitate next steps, which includes a business analysis;

(b) Requested the CEB secretariat to report back at the next session of the Committee on progress made towards the formation of a steering group and the definition of a project proposal.

VIII. Any other business

A. Interaction between the Department of Safety and Security and staff associations concerning risky duty stations

71. The Assistant Secretary-General for the Department of Safety and Security briefed the Committee on ongoing discussions between the Department and the staff associations on how to best ensure safety and security in high-risk environments, while respecting the principle of "how to stay". Such discussions are useful to develop mutual understanding and to further progress in the design of mutually acceptable arrangements and policies that regulate staff presence — both national and international — in high-risk environments.

B. Domestic partnerships

72. The Committee unanimously supported a suggestion by WFP to request the Human Resources Network to submit to the next meeting of the Committee a position paper on the issue of recognition of domestic partnerships for the purpose of benefits and entitlements. Based on such paper, the Committee would develop a recommendation on the matter for consideration by CEB.

C. Proposed agenda items and venues for the next sessions of the Committee

73. The Committee was informed that it had received three offers for hosting its upcoming sessions: UNESCO office at Venice, Italy, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at Santiago, and UNEP at Nairobi. The CEB secretariat would shortly reach out to organizations informing about the selected venue and proposing dates for the session in spring 2014.

74. The session in spring 2014 would host a thematic discussion on innovative financing, aimed at providing an overview of the innovative financing landscape, the experience of the United Nations system in this field and potential approaches going forward. An information-sharing session led by organizations who have already established global service centres would also be arranged.

75. The CEB secretariat will also explore the possibility of organizing a joint session with the High-level Committee on Programmes, on the subject of cybersecurity.

Annex I

Statement on the review of the common system compensation package by the International Civil Service Commission

1. The continued development of the international civil service as an independent, neutral, highly skilled and engaged resource is a key condition for the United Nations system to be able to effectively meet the ever-changing requirements of the international community.

2. Member organizations of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) reiterate their strong commitment and expectation to engage in a constructive dialogue with the International Civil Service Commission in the context of its review of the conditions of service for United Nations system staff.

3. CEB member organizations reconfirm their support for the continued application of the Noblemaire principle as the fundamental principle governing the conditions of service of Professional and higher categories staff in the common system, as recently reaffirmed by the General Assembly (see resolutions 66/235 A and 64/231).

4. Through the ICSC review, United Nations system organizations aim to develop a competitive and simplified compensation package that enables organizations to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre, in the context of strategic workforce planning.

5. The ICSC review should be based on common principles and implemented with the flexibility necessary to meet different organizational needs. It should promote innovation, transparency and cost-effectiveness, reduce transaction costs through simplification, and rely on objective evidence from systematic data gathering and monitoring on relevant trends.

6. The long-term ability of organizations to sustainably deliver the broad spectrum of programmatic activity, with correspondingly different business models, in the multitude of geographic locations where the United Nations system operates, must be the primary and overarching assessment criterion for the review.

7. In the view of CEB member organizations, a future compensation system should be informed by the following principles:

(a) *Fit for purpose and competitiveness*: it must be designed to be internationally competitive, and to attract, retain and promote high performing staff, cater for the broad set of knowledge-intensive skills and profiles needed by the United Nations system organizations to deliver on their respective mandates, and be fit for purpose and adaptable to their different business models;

(b) *Cost-effectiveness*: it should ensure predictability of staff costs and take in due consideration the financial situation of the organizations participating in the common system;

(c) *Equity*: it must be transparent. It should take in due consideration the expatriate nature and family status of internationally recruited staff, who are part of a global mobile workforce and serve outside their home country for — most or the whole of — the duration of their tenure with the organizations;

(d) *Simplification*: it must be simple to understand for staff, organizations and Member States alike. It should also be easy to administer, thus resulting in the reduction of transactional costs;

(e) *Diversity*: it should preserve and promote the international nature of the organizations and their membership, ensuring the desired diversity among staff with regard to gender, geographic representation, age and other relevant criteria;

(f) *Motivating staff and rewarding performance*: it should provide for adequate recognition of performance;

(g) *Hazardous and hardship duty stations*: it should provide appropriate incentives for service in hardship and high-risk duty stations;

(h) *Mobility*: it should encourage geographical, interorganizational and functional mobility, as appropriate to the mandates and business models of the individual organizations.

8. The ICSC review also presents an opportunity to renew the commitment of organizations to a cohesive and strong United Nations common system. In this spirit, CEB member organizations consider the following to be critical success factors:

(a) The review should be conducted in an open, evidence-based and consultative manner, allowing each organization of the common system to adequately contribute its requirements, expertise and knowledge to the discussion;

(b) The implementation of the new package and a communication strategy with the staff would need to be planned and agreed in a consensual manner with the organizations, in order to minimize any change-management-related risks;

(c) Acquired rights would have to be duly taken into consideration, including, where applicable, in transitional measures for current staff members;

(d) Organizational flexibility should be provided for in the implementation of the outcome of the review.

9. CEB member organizations look forward to a review whose scope remains limited to subjects directly related to compensation elements under the purview of ICSC.

Annex II

List of participants

Chair: Francis Gurry, World Intellectual Property Organization
Vice-Chair: Jan Beagle, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
Secretary: Remo Lalli, CEB secretariat

Name	*Organization*	*Title*
Yukio Takasu	United Nations	Under-Secretary-General for Management
Mbaranga Gasarabwe		Assistant Secretary-General of Safety and Security
Patrick Carey		Director, Office of the Chef de Cabinet, Executive Office of the Secretary-General
Nicolaas Von Ruben		Director, Department of Field Support
Antigoni Axenidou		Director, General Legal Division
Jillann Farmer		Director, Medical Services Division/Chair, United Nations System Medical Directors Working Group
Greg Vines	International Labour Organization	Deputy Director-General
Mark Levin		Director, Human Resources Development Department
Denis Aitken	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Assistant Director-General ad interim, Corporate Services, Human Resources and Finance Department
Getachew Engida	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Deputy Director-General
Ana Luiza Thompson-Flores		Director, Bureau of Human Resources Management, Co-Chair of Human Resources Net
Fang Liu	International Civil Aviation Organization	Director, Bureau of Administration and Services
Mohamed Jama	World Health Organization	Assistant Director-General for General Management
Bersabel Ephrem		Senior Adviser to the Assistant Director-General for General Management
Hanne Raatikainen		Management Officer

Name	*Organization*	*Title*
Angiolo Rolli	World Meteorological Organization	Director, Resource Management Department
Dietmar Plesse	International Telecommunication Union	Head, Procurement Division/Chair, Procurement Network
Julia Watt		Chief, Human Resources Management Department
Anders Norsker		Chief, Information Technology, Representative of the ICT Network
Ambi Sundaram	World Intellectual Property Organization	Assistant Director General, Administration and Management
Chitra Narayanaswamy		Director, Resource Planning, Programme Management and Performance Division
Lakshmi Menon	International Fund for Agricultural Development	Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services Department
Akmel P. Akpa	United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Officer-in-Charge, Programme Support and General Management Division
Jose G. Blanch	World Tourism Organization	Director, Administration Division
Janice Dunn Lee	International Atomic Energy Agency	Deputy Director-General and Head of Management
Jens Wandel	United Nations Development Programme	Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau of Management
Darshak Shah		Deputy Assistant Administrator, Deputy Director and Chief Financial Officer, Co-Chair, Finance and Budget Network
Michael Liley		Director, Human Resources Management and Co-Chair Human Resources Network
Martin Mogwanja	United Nations Children's Fund	Deputy Executive Director
Lori Issa		Coherence Specialist
Anne-Birgitte Albrectsen	United Nations Population Fund	Deputy Executive Director
Subhash K. Gupta		Director, Division for Management Services
Alexander T. Aleinikoff	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees

Name	*Organization*	*Title*
Karen Farkas		Director, Division of Human Resources Management
Olivier Delarue		Lead, UNHCR Innovation
Giovanie Biha	UN-Women	Director, Division of Management and Administration
Kate Rojkov	Pan American Health Organization	Director, Human Resources
Christophe Bouvier	United Nations Environment Programme	Director, Office for Operations and Corporate Services
Manoj Juneja	World Food Programme	Assistant Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer
Robert Opp		Director, Business Innovation and Support
Laura Londen	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Director, Human Resources Department
Jan Mattsson	United Nations Office for Project Services	Executive Director
Vitaly Vanshelboim		Deputy Executive Director
Eva Murray	International Trade Centre	Director of Administration
Tan Kok		Chief, Financial Management
Jane Nyakaru	UN-Habitat	Officer-in-Charge, Division of Management
Dennis Thatchaichawalit	United Nations Office at Vienna/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Director, Division of Management
Maria Hutchinson	United Nations System Staff College	Deputy Director and Head of Programmes
Other representatives		
Wolfgang Stoeckl	International Civil Service Commission	Vice-Chair
Regina Pawlik		Executive Secretary
Mira Bacelj	World Trade Organization	Director, Human Resources Division
Laura Thompson	International Organization for Migration	Deputy Director-General

Name	*Organization*	*Title*
Francis Boyle	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Director, Division of Administration
Ivan Alippi	International Criminal Court	Director, Common Administrative Services Division
Paulina Analena	Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System	President
Mohamed Chiraz Baly		General Secretary
Mauro Pace	Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations	President
Maria Dweggah		Information Officer
Dimitri Samaras	United Nations International Civil Servants Federation	President
Lucy E. C. Elliot	World Food Programme	Director, Internal Audit and Oversight — representative of UN-RIAS
By audio (for certain items)		
Frank Harnischfeger	International Monetary Fund	Director, Technology and General Services Department
Stephanie von Friedeburg	World Bank	Chief Information Officer and Vice-President
Clay Lin		Chief Information Security Officer
Andrea Townsend		Programme Manager — Strategic Partnership
Thomas Gass	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs
David Hanif		Director, Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination
CEB secretariat		
Simona Petrova	New York	Director
Phyllis Lee		Secretary, High-level Committee on Programmes

Name	*Organization*	*Title*
Kenneth Herman		Senior Adviser on Information Management Policy Coordination
Ronny Lindstrom	Geneva	Senior Business Practices Adviser
Michael Rosetz		Senior Inter-Agency Adviser on Human Resources Management
Richard Maciver		ICT Specialist and Webmaster
Natalia Toschi		Inter-Agency Adviser on Finance and Budget
Cheryl Stafford	New York	Programme Officer

Annex III

Checklist of documents

Title	*Document symbol*
Provisional agenda	CEB/2013/HLCM/8
Provisional programme of work	CEB/2013/HLCM/8/Add.1
Performance management:	
UNOPS pilot project on rewards, recognition and sanctions	CEB/2013/HLCM/9
Presentations by keynote speakers	Presentations
Strategic plan (for reference)	CEB/2013/HLCM/2
Results framework (as at 25 September 2013)	CEB/2013/HLCM/10
Briefings on the work of High-level Committee on Management networks: Finance and Budget Network	CEB/2013/HLCM/11A
Briefings on the work of High-level Committee on Management networks: ICT Network	CEB/2013/HLCM/11B
Briefings on the work of High-level Committee on Management networks: Procurement Network	CEB/2013/HLCM/11C
Progress report on the adoption of IPSAS	CEB/2013/HLCM/11D
Information note by the ICT Network on cybersecurity challenges	CEB/2013/HLCM/16
Response to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review:	
Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226	Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/5
Action Plan in follow-up to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review mandates	CEB/2013/HLCM/12
United Nations Development Group/High-level Committee on Management — business operations strategy scoping mission Brazil	–
Business operations strategy (factsheet)	–
ICSC review of the United Nations system compensation package:	
Outlook of the review's content, process and timelines	CEB/2013/HLCM/14
Draft statement on the ICSC review (1 October 2013)	CEB/2013/HLCM/13
ICSC draft 2013 annual report, paras. 25-56	A/68/30

Title	*Document symbol*
Mandatory age of separation — report of ICSC	ICSC/77/R.4
ICSC draft 2013 annual report, paras. 57-76	A/68/30
United Nations System Data Visualization Platform: draft project vision and outline	CEB/2013/HLCM/15